

RED WHITE & BLUE JOBS

Finding a Great Job in the
Federal Government



PARTNERSHIP
FOR
PUBLIC SERVICE

www.calltoserve.org

The Partnership for Public Service

The Partnership for Public Service (www.ourpublicservice.org) is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to recruiting and retaining excellence in the federal civil service. Through an aggressive campaign of agency reform, legislative advocacy, focused research and educational efforts, the Partnership encourages talented people to choose federal service for some or all of their careers and works with the government to help retain high-achieving federal employees.

A Call to Serve: Leaders in Education Allied for Public Service

The Partnership for Public Service has joined with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management to develop a national initiative, "A Call to Serve: Leaders in Education Allied for Public Service," which is designed to educate a new generation about the importance of a strong civil service, help re-establish links between federal agencies and campuses, and provide students with information about federal jobs. A Call to Serve was unveiled in April 2002 on the campus of the George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

www.calltoserve.org

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September 2002

Dear Student,

In times of peace and prosperity, it is not always easy to see the connections between our lives and our government. But in the events of the past year, that changed.

Whether it was September 11th, bioterrorism, wildfires, corporate scandals, or even the West Nile Virus, the critical role the federal government plays in Americans' daily lives has become clear to all of us.

It is encouraging to see public service drawing more of the attention it deserves, but much work needs to be done to interest talented Americans in federal employment.

A national survey commissioned by the Partnership for Public Service shows that a lack of information about federal employment opportunities is the single greatest obstacle to recruitment. In fact, that same survey shows that if given enough information about federal service, college graduates consider it not just one of many possibilities, but a particularly attractive one.

The Partnership for Public Service has joined forces with the U. S. Office of Personnel Management to launch "Call to Serve," an education and outreach initiative aimed at college students.

Call to Serve (www.calltoserve.org) aims to connect young people to the myriad opportunities federal service provides by strengthening relationships between federal agencies and campuses, and arming college students with more and better information about federal employment opportunities. This booklet is an important step toward that goal.

Inside you will learn about the various federal agencies, the benefits they provide and the many opportunities that await you. You will also get valuable tips on where to look for federal jobs, how to apply and more importantly, how you can make a difference.

As you prepare to enter the world of work, I hope you will consider answering the call to serve and joining a new generation committed to making a difference through public service.

Sincerely,

**Max Stier, President and CEO
Partnership for Public Service**

Why Should I Work for the Government?

"When I talk to my students, I tell them that what you do in government at any given level matters more than what business people at a comparable level do. What [business people] do is good for the management and the stockholders, and sometimes, if they're lucky, for all the customers as well. What [federal workers] do affects the well-being — the survival, even — of millions."

—Elliot L. Richardson

Former Attorney General and Secretary of Commerce, Defense, Health, Education and Welfare

Yes, You Can Make a Difference

If the opportunity to serve your country isn't enough to do it for you, consider the very real ways the work of federal employees impacts all of us.

In the frantic and terrible hours following the first attacks on September 11th, employees of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at the National Institutes of Health had been meeting in New York. They quickly set up a first aid center in Brooklyn to provide assistance to victims crossing the bridge from Manhattan.

On the same day, officials of the U.S. Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service gathered in Washington, D.C. to hammer out tax relief policies. Within

two days, the IRS put policies in place to make sure victims and families wouldn't be burdened with tax issues if they were coping with losses.

After the anthrax attacks in November, Environmental Protection Agency employees were responsible for cleaning up the contamination in the quarantined Hart Senate Office Building. And remember the Customs Service employee in Washington state who was respon-

Did You Know...?

The federal government is the nation's largest employer.

sible for stopping a terrorist from bringing a car full of explosives into the country just two weeks before the millennium celebrations?

In the past year, the vital role that government workers play in times of crisis has become all too clear. But it's only a small part of the daily work of government to ensure the health, safety and well-being of its citizens.

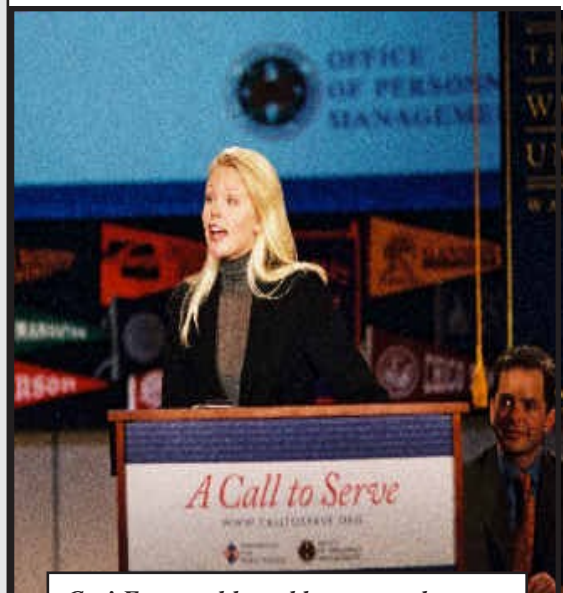
Making a Difference:

Cari Eggspuehler

Special Assistant, Office of Public Diplomacy & Public Affairs
Department of State

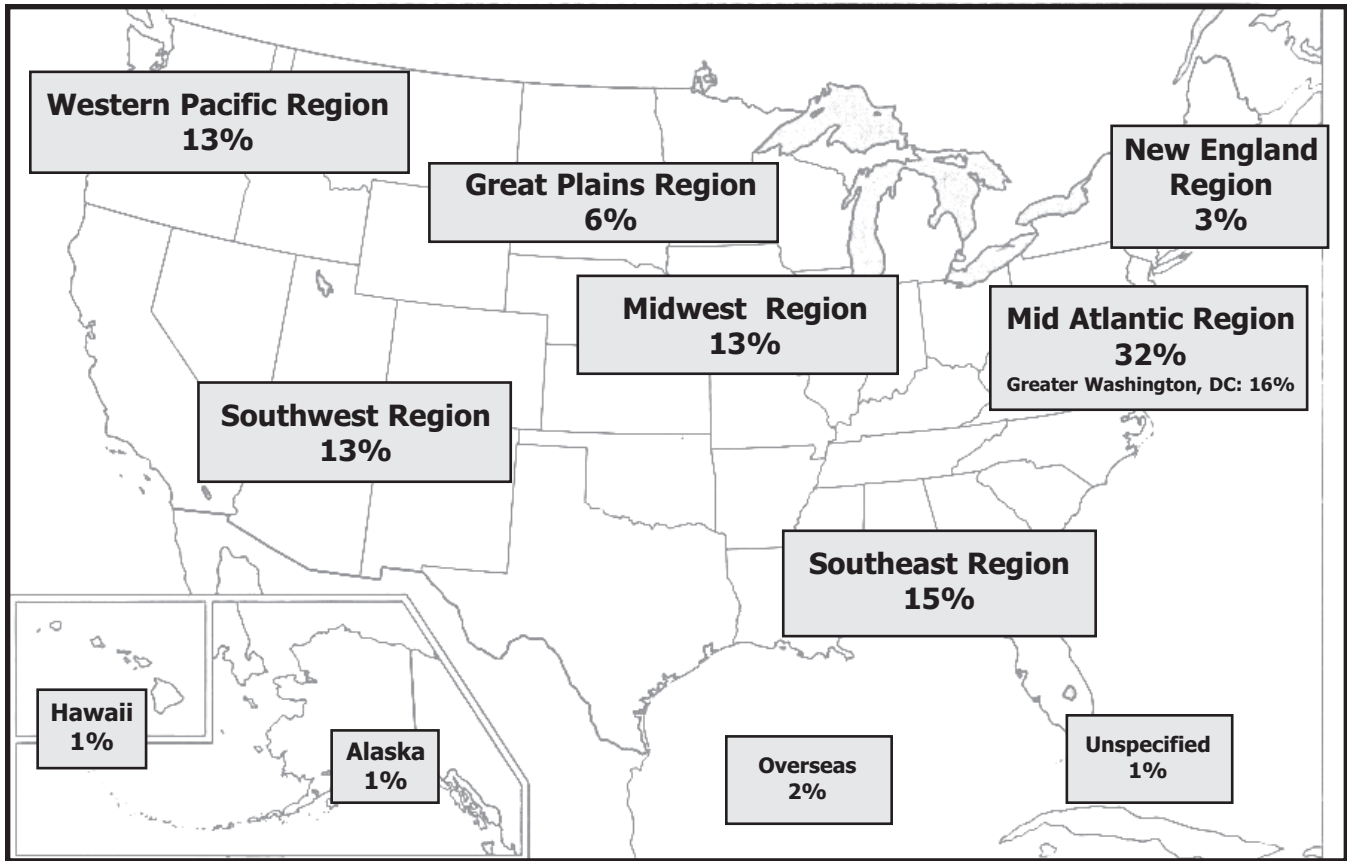
Combining her passions for technology and travel, Cari Eggspuehler found her ideal job with the U.S. Department of State. Eggspuehler applied and was selected for the Presidential Management Intern Program. She joined the State Department as a computer security specialist with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. For three years she served as a spokesperson for computer security, briefing over 500 Ambassadors and State Department Senior Officers, including current Secretary of State Colin Powell. Not only did the State Department pay for all of her systems training and certifications, but she also had the opportunity to travel extensively, inspecting State Department computer security systems and briefing embassy staff in over 40 countries. Eggspuehler now works for the Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy & Public Affairs.

"From the day I started," Eggspuehler says, "I have done everything they promised that I would do."



Cari Eggspuehler addresses students at the national launch of the Call to Serve campaign on The George Washington University campus in Washington, D.C.

Where Do Federal Employees Work?



Our government workforce is responsible for protecting the water we drink and the food we eat, ensuring the safety of the air we breathe and the preservation of the national parks we enjoy. Government workers protect our borders and skies, send out every Social Security check our retirees receive, and provide the regulatory infrastructure upon which American business depends.

Throughout this booklet you will find personal stories of how government workers are making a difference – every single day.

There's a Job for Every Interest

Another great thing about working for the government is that you can perform a number of jobs across a wide variety of agencies.

Say you like working with computers. You can be an IT specialist at the State Department. Interested in how people think? You can be a forensic psychologist at the FBI or an employee development specialist at the Department of Education. Like crunching numbers? You can study the economics of the farming industry at the Department of Agriculture or be a re-

search statistician at the Bureau of Labor Statistics. If you want a career in medicine, you can help find a treatment for the West Nile Virus at the Centers for Disease Control or do groundbreaking research at the Department of Defense.

Did You Know...?

There are approximately 1.8 million civilian employees in the federal government.

And, because the federal government offers opportunities in just about every field and at all levels, working for the federal government can be a great career builder, not simply a career. In fact, many jobs offer unparalleled on-the-job training and even paid graduate education – valuable experiences and skills that you can use to serve your country and in other opportunities you may choose to pursue down the road.

By the way, working for the federal government doesn't mean you have to move to Washington, D.C. About 84% of federal jobs are located outside of the greater Washington, D.C. area (see map above).

What Can I Do In Government With My Major?

For more federal jobs listed by degree, please visit the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's website at www.usajobs.opm.gov/EI23.htm.

ANY MAJOR

Administrative Officer
Air Traffic Controller
Civil Rights Analyst
Claims Examining
Contact Representative
Contract Administration
Environmental Protection
General Investigator
Internal Revenue Officer
Logistics Management
Management Analyst
Paralegal Specialist
Personnel Occupations
Public Affairs
Writing and Editing

ACCOUNTING

Accountants
Auditors
Contract Specialists
Financial Managers
GAO Evaluators
Internal Revenue Agents

AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Engineers
Graders
Soil Conservationists

ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropologists
Museum Curators
Museum Specialists

ARCHEOLOGY

Archaeologists
Museum Curators

ARCHITECTURE

Architects
Construction Analysts
Landscape Architects
Naval Architects

ARTS (FINE AND APPLIED)

Exhibits Specialists
General Arts and Information
Specialists
Illustrators
Photographers
Recreation and Creative Arts
Therapists

ASTRONOMY

Astronomers and Space Scientists
Geodesists

AVIATION

Aircraft Operators
Aircrew Technicians

Air Navigators
Air Safety Investigators
Air Traffic Controllers
Aviation Safety Inspectors

BIOLOGY

General Biological Scientists
Microbiologists
Wildlife Biologists
Zoologists

BOTANY

Agronomists
Botanists
Forestry Technicians
Geneticists
Horticulturists
Plant Pathologists
Range Conservationists

BUSINESS

Budget Analysts
Contract Specialists
Import Specialists
Internal Revenue Officers
Trade Specialists

CHEMISTRY

Chemical Engineers
Environmental Engineers
Food Technologists
Intelligence Specialists

CITY/COMMUNITY PLANNING

Community Planners
Realtors

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications Specialists
Public Affairs Specialists
Telecommunications Managers
Writers and Editors

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Computer Programmers
Computer Science Specialists
Computer Specialists
Program Managers

CORRECTIONS

Administrators
Correctional Officers
Program Analysts

COUNSELING

Chaplains
Psychologists
Social Service Aides

CRIMINAL JUSTICE OR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Border Patrol Agents
Criminal Investigators
Internal Revenue Officers
Police Officers
United States Marshals

DIETETICS AND NUTRITION

Dietitians
Food Technologists
Nutritionists

ECONOMICS

Actuaries
Budget Analysts
Contract Specialists
Economists
Financial Analysts
Loan Specialists
Trade Specialists
Transportation Industrial Analysts

EDUCATION

Education and Training Specialists
Educational and Vocational
Training Specialists
Employee Dev. Specialists

ELECTRONICS TECHNOLOGY

Communications Specialists
Electronics Mechanics
Electronics Technicians
Patent Examiners

EMPLOYEE OR LABOR RELATIONS

Contractor Industrial Relations
Specialists
Employee Relations Specialists
Hearing and Appeals Specialists
Labor Relations Specialists

ENGINEERING

Aerospace Engineers
Biomedical Engineers
Civil Engineers
Computer Engineers
Electrical Engineers
General Engineers
Industrial Engineers
Mechanical Engineers
Nuclear Engineers

ENGLISH AND LITERATURE

Editorial Assistants
Printing Specialists
Public Affairs Specialists
Technical Writers and Editors
Writers and Editors

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Ecologists
Environmental Health Technicians
Environmental Protection
Specialists
Fish and Wildlife Administrators

EPIDEMIOLOGY

Environmental Health Technicians
Gen. Health Scientists
Industrial Hygienists
Microbiologists

FINANCE

Appraisers and Assessors
Budget Analysts
Financial Administrators
Financial Analysts
Financial Institution Examiners
Tax Examiners
Trade Specialists

FISH, GAME, AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Fishery Biologists
Game Law Enforcement Agents
Soil Conservationists
Wildlife Biologists

FOOD TECHNOLOGY AND SAFETY

Consumer Safety Inspectors
Dietitian and Nutritionists
Food Assistance Program
Specialists
Food Technologists
Toxicologists

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Air Safety Investigators
Border Patrol Agents
Customs Inspectors
Intelligence Specialists

FORESTRY

Foresters
Soil Conservationists

GEOGRAPHY

Cartographers
Geographers

GEOLOGY

Geodesists
Geologists
Hydrologists
Oceanographers

GEOPHYSICS Geophysicists	JOURNALISM Agricuilt. Market Reporters Printing Specialists Public Affairs Specialists Technical Writers and Editors Writers and Editors	MEDICAL SUPPORT Diagnostic Radiological Technicians Medical Technicians Nuclear Medicine Pathology Technicians	Psychologists Recreation and Creative Arts Therapists
HEALTH Environmental Health Technicians General Health Scientists Industrial Hygienists Public Health Programs Specialists	LAW Administrative Law Judges Attorneys Hearing and Appeals Specialists Legal Instruments Examiners Paralegal Specialists Patent Attorneys Tax Law Specialists	METEOROLOGY Meteorologists General Physical Scientists	PUBLIC HEALTH Environmental Health Technicians Food Inspectors
HISTORY Archives Technicians Archivists Historians Intelligence Specialists Museum Curators	LAW ENFORCEMENT Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Inspectors Border Patrol Agents Criminal Investigators Customs Inspectors Immigration Inspectors Police Officers United States Marshals	NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT Fish and Wildlife Administrators General Biological Scientists Wildlife Biologists	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION Budget Analysts Employee Relations Specialists Housing Managers
HOME ECONOMICS Consumer Safety Officers Food Technologists	LIBERAL ARTS/HUMANITIES Customs Inspectors Equal Opportunity Compliance Specialists Management Analysts Veterans Claims Examiners	NURSING Nurses Physician's Assistants	PUBLIC RELATIONS Foreign Affairs Specialists Public Affairs Specialists
HORTICULTURE Agricultural Management Specialist Plant Physiologists Plant Protection and Quarantine Specialists	LIBRARY SCIENCE Librarians Technical Information Services	PARK/RECREATION MANAGEMENT Foresters Outdoor Recreation Planners Park Rangers	REAL ESTATE Building Managers Housing Managers Realtors
HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION General Health Scientists Health System Specialists Hospital Housekeepers Public Health Programs Specialists	MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS Computer Science Specialists Financial Managers Management Analysts	PHARMACY Consumer Safety Inspectors Pharmacists Pharmacologists	REHABILITATION THERAPY Occupational Therapists Physical Therapists
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT Equal Employment Opportunity Specialists Military Personnel Management Specialists	MANAGEMENT, FACILITIES Correctional Institution Administrators General Facilities and Equipment Managers Housing Managers Industrial Property Managers Production Controllers	PHYSICAL EDUCATION Corrective Therapists Recreation Aides Recreation Specialists	SOCIAL WORK Psychology Aids Social Service Aids Social Workers
HYDROLOGY Environmental Engineers	MANAGEMENT Administrative Officers Manpower Developers	PHYSICAL SCIENCE General Physical Scientists Metallurgists Physicists	SOCIOLOGY Social Scientists Social Service Aides Sociologists
INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT Business and Industrial Specialists Equipment Specialists	MARKETING Agricultural Marketing Specialists Supply Specialists Trade Specialists Business and Industry Specialists	PHYSICS Astronomers and Space Scientists General Physical Scientists Health Physicists Hydrologists Oceanographers Patent Examiners Physicists	STATISTICS Actuaries Computer Science Specialists Mathematical Statisticians
INSURANCE Social Insurance Administrators Unemployment Insurance Specialists	MATHEMATICS Computer Science Mathematical Statisticians	POLITICAL SCIENCE Archivists Budget Analysts Historians Foreign Affairs Specialists Public Affairs Specialists	SURVEYING Geodesists Land Surveyors
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS Foreign Affairs Specialists Intelligence Specialists International Relations Workers Public Affairs Specialists Trade Specialists		PSYCHOLOGY Educational Services Specialists Employee Development Specialists Personnel Staffing Specialists Position Classification Specialists	SYSTEMS ANALYSIS Computer Science Specialists IT Specialists
		THEOLOGY Chaplains Social Workers	TRANSPORTATION Highway Safety Specialists Transportation Specialists
		ZOOLOGY Animal Scientists Physiologists Zoologists	

Where Can I Find Information About Federal Job Openings?

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is the federal government's human resources agency.

By law, all government agencies must post any vacancies open to outside applicants on OPM's jobs website. This is a great place to start your hunt:

www.USAJOBS.opm.gov

Besides being able to search a database of federal job openings updated daily, USAJOBS allows you to find answers to a lot of logistical questions and provides a number of useful tools:

• • • • •
• **RESUME BUILDER** enables you to develop a resume suitable for most federal job applications. After you build your resume, you can store it on the USAJOBS website for 120-day periods that can be extended indefinitely.
• • • • •

• **HOT JOBS** highlights hard-to-fill occupations and agencies that have large numbers of open positions.
• • • • •

• **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS** reviews all kinds of topics related to looking for a federal job.
• • • • •

• **CAREER EXPLORATION** helps link your interests to types of jobs in the federal government.
• • • • •

• **E-MAIL UPDATE** sends daily job postings that are based on your job search criteria right to your inbox, every day.
• • • • •

In addition to the USAJOBS website, OPM administers a specially designed site called Student Jobs.

www.studentjobs.gov

You can search for jobs, create a job seeker's profile and build an elec-

tronic resume all on the Student Jobs website. Be sure to check it out!

A number of other websites can help you track down information about federal job opportunities:

Monster Public Service **publicservice.monster.com**

The leading global online network for careers, Monster.com, has recently devoted a new area of its website solely to employment opportunities in the federal government. The site helps you get the facts on negotiating the federal job search and application process and learn about the benefits of public service.

AvueCentral **www.avuecentral.com**

AvueCentral allows applicants to apply for federal jobs and receive notification of opportunities of interest. Applicants for positions at federal agencies that are clients of Avue can expedite the process, sending their application directly to these agencies and then monitoring their progress. For agencies that are not Avue clients, applicants can automatically generate and print a hard copy resume from a "base profile" maintained online.

Federal Jobs Center **www.fedjobs.com**

This site is run by a company that publishes federal job vacancy information in a weekly publication called "Federal Career Opportunities." The site offers a variety of resources for first-time applicants as well as those who already work in federal service. The site's database can be searched for a one-day fee of \$5, a \$20 monthly fee, or a three month stint for \$49. It also offers a Search and Send service that will send you free e-mails about job opportunities that match the criteria you select. Four printed reports a month are available for \$21.

Federal Job Search

www.federaljobsearch.com

This site allows you to enter a personal profile of your career interests, and then receive regular e-mail updates on new federal job postings that match your profile. The basic service, which provides you with the titles, salaries and locations of positions, as well as links to the federal agencies that are hiring, is free. There is also a premium fee-based service that links to contact information, application instructions and complete job descriptions.

Making a Difference:

Laura Lazo
Even Start Administrator,
U.S. Department of Education

Laura Lazo developed an interest in public policy while working as a Pomona College undergraduate for a career resource development center serving refugees and immigrants. Carrying her interest into graduate school, Lazo studied at the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Policy at the University of Texas, Austin, a track she hoped would allow her to "reform social policy from a higher level." Upon graduation she followed through on this goal as a Presidential Management Intern with the Department of Education. As the current administrator of *Even Start*, Lazo oversees a program that promotes literacy and travels the country informing school districts about education policy.

GET ON THE FAST TRACK TO FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT!

The government sponsors key employment programs for college graduates and graduate students that expose them to the variety of federal employment opportunities, and expedites the hiring process:

The Federal Career Intern Program **www.opm.gov/careerintern/index.htm**

This program was created to bring talented people into the government at the entry level for a two-year appointment without their having to jump through too many hiring hoops. After two years, successful federal career interns can become regular civil service employees. Eligibility for the program depends on the needs of each individual federal agency. For information about career intern openings, contact the agencies individually or go to their web sites.

The Outstanding Scholar Program **www.opm.gov/employ/luevano.htm**

Under this program, some agencies can directly hire entry-level applicants who have maintained an undergraduate grade point average of 3.5 or better, or who graduated in the upper 10% of their graduating class or major university subdivision. Applicants can apply nine months before graduation. Finding jobs available to "Outstanding Scholars" is not always easy, because there is no single place to look. However, a good place to start is USAJOBS' entry-level professional listings, using "scholar" as a key word. Students who receive a permanent job through the Outstanding Scholars program typically come in at the GS-7 pay scale, and move up to a GS-9 after a year. (See page 12 for more information on federal pay scales.)

The Presidential Management Intern Program **www.pmi.opm.gov**

Designed to groom talented people for upper-level management positions in the federal government, the Presidential Management Interns (PMI) program is a two-year program for students who have just completed graduate school. Students must apply through their academic institution during their final year of study.

It is open to all graduate students—and that does mean all. If you just got your master's in art history or your J.D. with a focus on international law, you can still be a PMI—as long as you have a demonstrable interest in public policy and management.

Applicants must first receive a nomination from their school before participating in the PMI program's rigorous evaluation and assessments process. Finalists are then qualified to apply for PMI positions at the many federal agencies that participate in the program. Most make matches at the PMI job fair (every Spring) or through the program's website. Finalists are not guaranteed a job, but most receive one.

PMI positions are structured by the individual agencies and differ widely. All include some training opportunities and a rotational assignment to another agency or branch of government.

PMIs are appointed at the GS-9 pay scale, and after one year are eligible for promotion to GS-11. After two years, PMIs are eligible for conversion to permanent positions and are eligible for promotion to the GS-12 level. (For information about salaries, see page 12.)

FedWorld **www.fedworld.gov**

The FedWorld Federal Job Search, a project of the Department of Commerce, uses data gathered from hundreds of government human resource offices. FedWorld downloads source files from their "FJOB" system, which contains a series of search functions, including by experience level and by state. Check out the FJOB system at www.fedworld.gov/jobs/jobsearch.html.

FirstGov **www.firstgov.gov**

FirstGov is the official U.S. gateway to all government information on the Internet. Among other services, the site offers information on finding a government job by linking to the USA JOBS website.

Government Guide **www.governmentguide.com**

Government Guide provides information about finding employment at all levels of government. The site also offers information on pay scales and resources available for current federal employees, including information on continued education opportunities.

HRS Federal Job Search **www.hrsjobs.com**

This site offers e-mail services that match federal job openings to your specified search criteria. Subscriptions cost \$12 for 3 months or \$24 for a year. The site's free resources include links to pages such as How the Federal Application Process Works, Vacancy Announcement Listings, and Federal Job Tips.

Public Service Employees Network **www.pse-net.com**

A great collection of resources with special emphasis on those government jobs that require entrance exams. See a list of the top federal jobs at www.pse-net.com/joblistings/joblistingFederalJobs.htm.

How Do I Apply for a Federal Job?

Most federal job openings are described in a **vacancy announcement** that contains specific application instructions.

To respond to vacancy announcements, applicants need to submit a resume containing specific information; a description of your relevant **knowledge, skills and abilities**; and any supporting information called for by the vacancy announcement, such as college transcripts.

Typically, resumes submitted by federal job-seekers must include some very specific information that your existing resume probably doesn't include.

While some job announcements specify this required information, others may refer you to an OPM brochure called "Applying for a Federal Job."

You can download this document at www.opm.gov/forms/pdfimage/of0510.pdf.

There is no such thing as an official "federal resume" form, so format is not as important as collecting the right information when you apply for a federal job.

If you prefer working online, consider using the USAJOBS resume builder webpage. It will walk you through the process, ensuring you have everything in your

NEW FEDERAL HIRES BY OCCUPATION - 2001*

NUMBER OF HIRES

Administrative	6,499
Nurse	6,157
General Education/Training	6,135
Medical Officer	3,276
Computer Specialist	2,736
Education/Vocational Training	2,235
Attorney	2,145
Park Ranger	1,758
Management and Analysis	1,389
Criminal Investigator	1,281
Biological Scientist	1,233
Social Insurance Administrator	1,178
Veterans' Claims Examiner	1,153
Contracting Specialist	1,145
Pharmacist	948
Social Work	919
General Health Science	913
Electronic Engineer	842
Psychologist	765
Foreign Affairs Specialist	746
Paralegal	745

NEW FEDERAL HIRES BY SECTOR - 2001*

NUMBER OF HIRES

Medical, Dental, and Public Health	14,501
Education	9,368
Social Science, Psychology, and Welfare	5,963
Engineering and Architecture	4,903

FACT: From archaeologists to zoologists, there's a government job in almost any field. The federal government hires a variety of professionals in many different occupations.

TOTAL FEDERAL HIRES FOR 2001* = 74,310

*Professional and administrative jobs only.

Making a Difference:

Darin Johnson
Assistant to the General Counsel, U.S. Army
Department of Defense

Darin Johnson feels strongly about making a career out of helping his country. His resolve was strengthened by the attacks that decimated a section of the Pentagon on September 11th – only a corridor away from the office where he works as assistant to the General Counsel of the U.S. Army. Like many federal agencies, the Army has an “honors” program for recent law school graduates. As an honors attorney, Johnson was given a higher level of responsibility than would ordinarily go to someone who had just passed the bar exam. As a full partner and member of the legal team, he is expected to deal with high-level policy issues and work closely with the general counsel and deputy general counsel.

“This whole experience solidified the value and importance of using all your talents and skills to help others,” Johnson says.

application package that needs to be there. You can also store, edit, and print out your resume from the site.

Be sure to check out the page on the USAJOBS website. Go to **www.usajobs.opm.gov** then click on the “**Build Your Resume**” link.

What are KSAs, or Rating Factors?

Federal job applicants need to describe how their experiences demonstrate that they possess the knowledge, skills and abilities – or KSAs – needed for the job.

Vacancy announcements for federal jobs frequently list KSAs – also known as rating factors, selection criteria or ranking factors – that the agency is seeking in a candidate for the job.

Your ability to successfully address these KSAs is quite important to the success of your application – it deserves special time and attention.

Detail is important. Describe your experiences, accomplishments and successes. Don’t just repeat your job description!

Be sure to include as much information as you can that responds to each KSA factor, even if that information was already included on your federal resume.

Don’t forget that many vacancy announcements feature the same, or similar, KSAs – such as the ability to communicate well verbally. Be sure to save your KSA re-

sponses – they can be used in support of multiple federal job applications.



Online Applications

A growing number of federal agencies are making use of online application systems in which the entire application process may be completed via the Internet.

Check the agency’s vacancy announcement to determine whether you can apply online.

What Else Does a Federal Job Have to Offer?

Salary

To get an idea of how much federal jobs pay, visit the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's website:

www.opm.gov/oca

You'll see that most white-collar federal jobs fall under the "General Schedule" or "GS" pay scale. Under this system, jobs are ranked according to level of responsibility and difficulty, and are assigned corresponding "grades" and salaries.

College graduates with a four-year degree typically enter the system at GS-5 or GS-7. Master's level graduates usually enter at a GS-9 or higher, depending upon number of years of work experience.

For some hard-to-fill positions, agencies may be able to offer a "special pay rate" that allows them to offer more attractive salaries for selected occupations.

Currently, some IT workers, medical personnel, and engineers qualify.

Also, where you live affects what you get paid. This is called a "locality pay rate." The pay scale in Washington, D.C., for example, goes like this*:

A **GS- 7** makes a starting salary of **\$31,397**

A **GS-9** makes a starting salary of **\$38,406**

A **GS-11** makes a starting salary of **\$46,469**

A **GS-12** makes a starting salary of **\$55,694**

*As of January 2002.

To see what you would earn according to where you live, visit:

www.opm.gov/oca/o2tables/indexGS.htm

Average Annual Salaries in the Federal Government by Occupation (March 2001)

<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>SALARY</u>
All occupations	\$51,565
Patent administrator	102,392
Astronomer	89,734
Attorney	86,673
Financial manager	79,840
Computer scientist	75,351
Economist	74,089
Podiatrist	73,172
Chemist	70,435
Electrical engineer	69,560
Statistician	68,901
Architect	68,872
Microbiologist	67,835
Accountant	64,767
Personnel manager	64,411
Librarian	63,651
Chaplain	63,366
Ecologist	61,936
Intelligence agent	61,424
Budget Analyst	56,706
Physical therapist	55,213
Social worker	54,129
Botanist	53,131
Nurse	51,019
Engineering technician	50,850
Law clerk	46,533
Border Patrol agent	43,917
Fire prevention worker	33,915
Secretary	33,354
Police officer	32,934
Medical technician	30,183
Dental assistant	27,387
Nursing assistant	26,992
Mail and file clerk	26,038

SOURCE: United States Office of Personnel Management

Work-Life Balance

Does the idea of setting your own work schedule appeal to you? What about working hours that allow you to take Fridays off? If you work for the federal government, these possibilities can be realities.

Unlike many private sector employers, the government offers a variety of programs, from flexible work schedules to telecommuting, to make life easier for its most valuable resource: its workers.

Get This!

Some federal agencies will actually pay you to advance your education!

Through the Scholarship for Service program, students studying IT security at select schools receive tuition, room and board, and stipends for the final two years of undergraduate study or for a two year masters' degree. In addition to an internship component, students participate in special conferences and seminars, and work for an agency for a minimum of two years after graduation.

For more details, go to:

www.opm.gov/hr/employ/products/recruitment/Scholarship/scholarshipmain.htm

Making a Difference:

Jennie Berry

**Public Service Fellow,
Office of the Commissioner,
Federal Communications Commission**

Jennie Berry always thought she'd go into journalism. When she graduated in June 2001, instead of pursuing journalism, she joined the agency that supervises federal oversight of the media. As a Public Service Fellow at the Federal Communications Commission, Berry worked directly with the Commissioner of the FCC. She gained expertise in high-speed Internet access, serving as the staff spokesperson on the issue with representatives from the European Union in Brussels. Berry now plans to attend law school and is interested in returning to government service as an attorney.

"I gained an insider's view of the challenging arena of communications policy," Berry says about her experience.

Imagine a family-friendly employer that provides paid holidays, ample vacation days, programs for employees to find daycare and eldercare for their families.

Does the image of a large Fortune 500 corporation pop into your head? Maybe a progressive IT company? Think again. This employer of choice is the federal government.

According to a recent report by OPM, a majority of federal agencies surveyed provided work and family programs to their staff. These included telecommuting programs, flexible work schedules and resource/referral services for child and elderly care.

Now, more than ever, Americans are looking to spend more time with family and loved ones. Having a healthy work/life balance is an integral part of that and, as a federal employee, it is not only possible, but encouraged.

Health Insurance

The federal government recognizes that good health helps employees be happier and more productive. For that reason, the government offers one of the most comprehensive health care packages available.

With over 245 plans participating in its health insurance program, the government has one of the widest - and best - selections of plans available in the country.

CHECK IT OUT:

Federal agencies may offer loan repayment assistance of up to \$6,000 a year, \$40,000 total, per person, for certain positions if employees agree to work for the agency for at least three years.

This program varies on an agency-by-agency basis, so be sure to check with the agency that interests you!

For more information on loan repayment for federal service, visit:

www.opm.gov/oca/pay/StudentLoan/HTML/QandAs.htm

Child Care

The federal government also has a terrific record on providing its employees with a work environment that promotes quality of life. In particular, the federal government has done a lot to help employees juggle work with the demands and responsibilities of family.

For example, the federal government has led the way in working to encourage quality child care. According to a recent OPM report, a majority of federal agencies surveyed provided their employees with resources and referrals for child care. Many agencies also provided on-site child care for their workers.

Retirement Planning

You're just getting started on your career path and retirement may seem a million years away, but saving early and often can help you enrich your future. So can working for the government.

As a member of the federal workforce, you would be eligible for the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), a savings plan similar to those private employers offer to their employees under 401(k) retirement plans.

Federal employees may choose to invest in any of three funds that are professionally managed by an independent government agency, the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board. And, the employee's agency will match a portion of their contribution.

IT'S A FACT!

The federal government offers one of the best benefit packages in the world:

- ✓ A 401(k)-type investment account
- ✓ Great health coverage
- ✓ Flexible working hours
- ✓ Generous annual and sick leave
- ✓ A pension based on how long you've worked and your total earnings

Making a Difference:

David Rowe
Program Examiner,
Office of Management and Budget

Working at the Office of Management and Budget, David Rowe has been able to study issues and policies that are important to him and the nation. In his five years as a program examiner with OMB, Rowe has seen the impact of his work. After interning at OMB and graduating from the Duke University Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy, Rowe joined the education branch of the President's policy office.

"I get great satisfaction in knowing that I'm personally contributing to sound policy decisions," says Rowe.

But I'm Still a Student. Can I Get Experience Now?

Definitely! The best way to find out if working for the federal government is for you is to try it.

The government offers a wide range of opportunities for summer internships, as well as temporary employment opportunities during the school year.

If you think you may be interested in working for government down the road (i.e., after you graduate), making contacts within government while working in a field that interests you is a win-win proposition. In fact, you can receive school credit through the **Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)**, which can also give you a leg up on landing a full-time federal job when you graduate.

However, because agencies aren't required to post their student opportunities in one central place (as they are for full time job openings on the **USAJOBS**

website), finding specific federal internships can get a little tricky. So what to do? In addition to checking out the resources at your college career center, visit these websites to start learning what opportunities are out there:

www.calltoserve.org
www.studentjobs.gov
www.students.gov
www.usajobs.opm.gov

If you already know what type of federal work you are interested in, try surfing

through specific agency websites. It's a great way to get to know what agency might be a good fit for you. Keep in mind that you can find the web addresses of many federal agencies in the section on agencies, which starts on page 16.

One last thing: if you aren't finding what you are looking for on the Internet, pick up the phone. Your local federal government offices are listed in the blue pages of your local phone book. Often, the best way to uncover an internship opportunity is to simply call the branch of the federal agency where you wish to work. Ask to speak with someone in charge of the agency's internship program. Then, ask that person about available positions and get a description of intern duties.

It's important to know not only what the agency does, but also what type of work it will entrust to interns so that you and your future employer are on the same page.

A Guide to Federal Internship Opportunities

There are two main types of student employment opportunities operated by the federal government, both of which offer flexible work schedules and enable students to work year-round.

Student Career Experience Program (www.opm.gov/employ/students/index.htm)

The SCEP program, sometimes referred to as the Co-op program, offers work experiences directly related to your academic field of study. It provides formal periods of work and study while you are attending school.

Student Temporary Employment Program (www.opm.gov/employ/students/index.htm)

The STEP program enables you to get a part time job during the school year or a summer job, and it does not need to be related to your academic field of study.

In addition, several non-profit organizations also help place students in internships at federal agencies, including:

The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Affairs (www.twc.edu)

The Washington Center places students in internships "representing major professional fields in the private, public and nonprofit sector." It also offers programs for students interested in working at federal agencies. Over the past five years, more than 35 percent of The Washington Center's roughly 5,000 interns served in federal agencies, the White House, and in Congress. In 2001 alone, The Washington Center placed approximately 170 interns in government agency positions, from the Internal Revenue Service to the State Department.

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (www.hacu.net)

Over the past ten years, HACU's National Internship Program (HNIP) has placed 3,400 undergraduate and graduate students in federal agency internships across the country. In 2001 alone over 615 students served in 22 federal agencies. While larger agencies, like the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services, made strong use of the program, interns also found positions at the Library of Congress, the Farm Credit Administration and the Central Intelligence Agency. While the majority of participants are Hispanic, Asian Americans, African Americans, and American Indians also serve in the HNIP.

National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (www.nafeo.org)

NAFEO places students in a wide range of federal offices, though Health and Human Services and Transportation have been particularly enthusiastic in their use of the program. Over the summer of 2001, these two agencies accepted 59 and 45 interns, respectively. Other agencies partnering with NAFEO included the Departments of Defense, Labor, Interior, Veterans Affairs and Energy; NASA; and the Environmental Protection Agency. 158 students took part in the program over the summer of 2001.

What Are the Major Federal Agencies and What Do They Do?

The 14 cabinet agencies (the leaders of which serve in the President's Cabinet) are responsible for national priorities ranging from Education to Defense to Transportation.

Each of these departments houses multiple agencies – the IRS and U.S. Mint are agencies within the Department of Treasury, for instance.

Look in the appendix at the back of this book for a listing of all agencies.

Department of Agriculture *www.usda.gov*

The USDA has a broad range of responsibilities related to food and farming issues. This includes farmer support programs, the development and expansion of markets for agricultural products, the oversight of food stamps and other hunger and poverty programs, and initiatives related to agricultural conservation and natural resource protection.

In addition, the department's inspectors are responsible for the safety of the nation's food supply and USDA employees run a broad array of rural development programs that provide housing, business loans and other assistance to rural communities. The U.S. Forest Service, with its park rangers and firefighters, is also an Agriculture Department agency.

Department of Commerce *www.doc.gov*

Department of Commerce officials monitor, and to some degree regulate, everything from foreign trade, to fishing, to the granting of patents. Commerce programs also provide statistics, analysis, and support to business and government planners.

Department of Defense *www.defenselink.mil*

You don't have to enlist to be an integral part of the nation's defense forces. Nearly 700,000 civilians work for DOD in various capacities.

These opportunities include everything from the formulation of military policy, to the oversight of complex acquisitions

contracts, to the analysis of classified information in one of the Department's numerous intelligence offices.

Department of Education *www.ed.gov*

The Department of Education aims to ensure that all students receive equal access to a quality education. Its duty is to the students, making sure that school systems provide proper school supplies, facilities, and qualified teachers. The department also promotes parental involvement in education, oversees financial aid policies, and encourages the use of modern technology in the classroom.

Department of Energy *www.doe.gov*

The Department of Energy works to ensure the nation has a steady, consistent and safe supply of energy, and its overall mission is to ensure national security and safety. For this reason the Department's policy areas include everything from alternative fuels to nuclear safety.

The Department is divided into four programmatic areas that focus on defense; energy production and efficiency; the environment; and scientific research.

Department of Health and Human Services *www.hhs.gov*

The Department of Health and Human Services is the government's primary agency for overseeing the public's health and well-being. This includes more than 300 programs ranging from food safety, to medical research, to drug abuse prevention. The agency often provides grants to local authorities, working with state, county and tribal governments to enact programs and provide essential services.

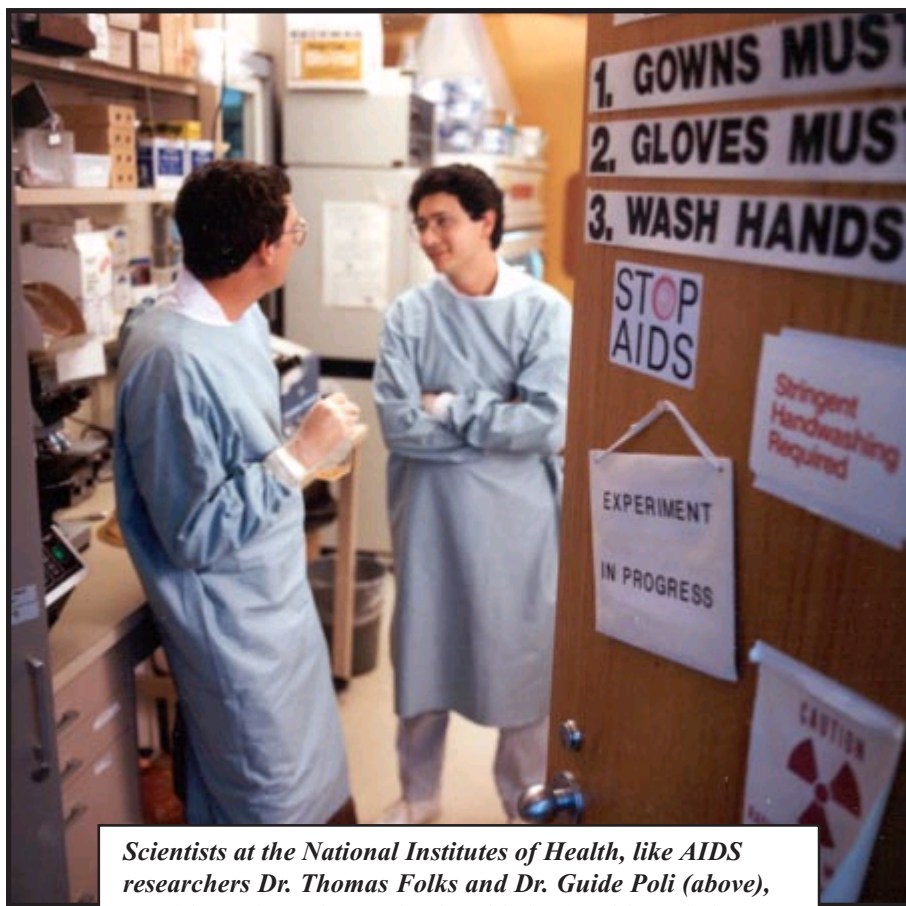
Department of Housing and Urban Development *www.hud.gov*

HUD is the agency tasked with meeting the housing needs of the nation's cities and ensuring that America's families have access to decent, safe and affordable housing.

HUD's biggest programs include insuring mortgages for single and multi-family homes; extending loans for home improvement and purchasing mobile homes; channeling funds from investors into the mortgage industry; making direct loans for construction or rehabilitation of housing projects for the elderly and the



The U.S. Customs Service doesn't just safeguard the nation's borders. Intercepting drug smugglers is another area in which U.S. Customs officers make a significant impact. In 2001, the agency's Canine Enforcement Program was responsible for nearly 8,000 arrests. (Photo by U.S. Customs Service)



Scientists at the National Institutes of Health, like AIDS researchers Dr. Thomas Folks and Dr. Guide Poli (above), provide cutting-edge medical and behavioral knowledge to improve the health of our citizens. (Photo by NIH)

handicapped; providing federal housing subsidies for low- and moderate-income families; and enforcing fair housing and equal housing access laws.

Department of the Interior ***www.doi.gov***

The Department of the Interior manages the nation's natural resources, from land and water, to coal and natural gas. By monitoring the extraction of natural resources, DOI works to efficiently use and protect the environment. Also, the department houses the office responsible for overseeing the U.S. government's relationship with Native American tribes.

Department of Justice ***www.usdoj.gov***

Headed by the U.S. Attorney General, the Department of Justice is the major law enforcement branch of the federal government. It enforces federal laws that protect the American public, including con-

sumer safeguards, immigration and naturalization statutes, and regulations promoting competitive business practices. The Federal Bureau of Investigation also falls under the authority of the Department of Justice.

Department of Labor ***www.dol.gov***

The Department of Labor administers and enforces laws and regulations that ensure safe working conditions, minimum hourly pay, and overtime.

Through its varied programs, the department works to meet the special needs of certain groups in the labor market including the disabled, the elderly, and minorities.

The Department of Labor also provides information on employment, such as job banks, unemployment benefits, and health regulations governing the workplace.

Department of State ***www.state.gov***

The State Department represents United States foreign policy through embassies and missions around the world. Among its numerous responsibilities, the Department coordinates diplomatic strategy, negotiates treaties, and guides the President's foreign policy, all in an effort to ensure global stability and safety.

Department of Transportation ***www.dot.gov***

DOT oversees vehicular and transportation issues. Cars, trucks, trains, boats, and airplanes all fall under the Department's authority. The agency sets national transportation policy, builds and maintains transportation infrastructure, and in general makes it possible for Americans to go home for the holidays, away on vacation, and even to and from work. Pending the creation of the new Department of Homeland Security, the Transportation Department is also home to the new Transportation Security Administration, which has specific responsibility for protecting the country's transportation system.

Department of the Treasury ***www.treas.gov***

The Treasury Department is responsible for implementing and overseeing domestic and international financial, economic, and tax policy. The Department also prints our money, manages the public debt, and collects the nation's taxes. Less obvious is the treasury's other major role – law enforcement. The Secret Service, which both guards the President and investigates financial crime, is a Treasury agency. Treasury even runs the federal government's training school for all federal law enforcement agencies.

Department of Veterans Affairs ***www.va.gov***

The VA is there to serve our nation's veterans. Best known for its healthcare system, the VA also provides social support services, educational programs, and administers veterans' pension benefits.

A Look at Other Federal Agencies

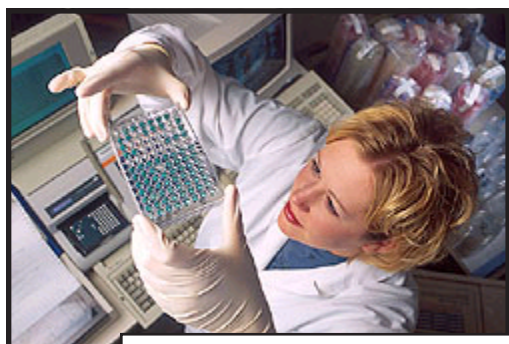
While you'll find the majority of federal jobs in the cabinet-level agencies, there are also a number of very interesting and varied civil service opportunities at independent agencies, government corporations, and in the Executive Office of the President. Below are descriptions of some of these agencies; take a look in the appendix for a full listing.

Central Intelligence Agency ***www.cia.gov***

The CIA coordinates intelligence activities. In addition to providing foreign intelligence for all officials responsible for national security policy, the CIA also conducts counterintelligence activities.

Congressional Budget Office ***www.cbo.gov***

The Congressional Budget Office provides Congress with non-partisan analyses for economic and budgetary decisions. In addition to helping the Congressional Budget Committees with economic forecasts and cost estimates for policies introduced in bills, the CBO also analyzes the President's budget.



The USDA is responsible for ensuring a nutritious and safe food supply, the care of agricultural and forest lands, as well as the economic health of rural communities. The type of work ranges from the livestock studies that Agricultural Research Service Technician Carolyn Johnson performs to the fire-fighting efforts of USDA Forest Service crews.
(Lab photo by Agricultural Research Service; firefighters photo by Bob Nichols, USDA)

Corporation for National and Community Service ***www.cns.gov***

The Corporation supports voluntary service of Americans of all ages through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve. The Corporation works with nonprofits, faith-based organizations, schools and other entities.

Environmental Protection Agency ***www.epa.gov***

The EPA safeguards the nation's air, water, and land. Working with other federal agencies as well as state and local governments and Indian tribes, the EPA is responsible for environmental research and standards setting.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ***www.eeoc.gov***

The EEOC enforces federal laws related to equal employment opportunity, which includes discrimination based upon race, religion, national origin, gender, age, and disability.

Export-Import Bank of the United States ***www.exim.gov***

The Export-Import Bank helps U.S. exporters by providing guarantees of working capital loans and guarantees of the repayment of loans to foreign purchasers of U.S. goods.

Federal Communications Commission ***www.fcc.gov***

The FCC regulates interstate and international radio, television, satellite, cable, and wire communications.

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation ***www.fdic.gov***

The FDIC is the nation's insurer of bank deposits and is tasked with maintaining the stability of the nation's financial system.



Federal Emergency Management Agency
www.fema.gov

FEMA is the federal government's emergency preparedness and disaster response and relief entity. The scope of FEMA's work includes everything from floods to earthquakes to the transport of hazardous substances.

Federal Reserve System
www.federalreserve.gov

The Federal Reserve is the nation's central bank. It establishes monetary policy, supervises banking institutions, maintains the stability of the financial system, and provides financial services to the government as well as the public and other institutions.

General Accounting Office
www.gao.gov

The GAO is the government's central watchdog agency. At the request of members of Congress, the GAO investigates, audits, and evaluates government programs to determine if they are meeting their goals, spending money efficiently, and operating lawfully, among other things. The agency then issues public reports on their findings which help guide policy decisions.

General Services Administration
www.gsa.gov

The General Services Administration is the government's property manager, landlord, acquisitions specialist, and office supplier. The agency sets policy to ensure government money is being spent wisely, government workplaces are up-to-date, and government management policies are working efficiently.

Library of Congress
www.loc.gov

The Library of Congress is the nation's library and serves as the research arm for Congress. It also has the distinction of being the largest library in the world, with over 120 million books, recordings, maps, manuscripts, and photographs. The Congressional Research Service, part of the Library of Congress, serves as Congress's "think tank." CRS provides non-partisan research and analysis on any topic that a member or committee of Congress may want to understand better to inform their policy development.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
www.nasa.gov

NASA staff and astronauts are the nation's vanguards in space exploration. The Apollo missions and Space Shuttle flights are just some of the more famous examples of NASA's work.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission
www.nrc.gov

The NRC regulates the nation's civilian use of nuclear material to protect public health and safety. The three main areas of oversight include nuclear reactors, the use of nuclear materials in medical, industry and other settings, and the handling of nuclear waste.

Office of Management and Budget
www.whitehouse.gov/omb

The OMB is responsible for formulating the President's budget and coordinating the Administration's procurement and financial management. In the process of budget development, the OMB also evaluates and shapes agency programs and policies.

Office of Personnel Management
www.opm.gov

The OPM is the federal government's human resources agency. In addition to working with agencies to create systems to recruit, develop, manage and retain a high quality and diverse workforce, OPM is also responsible for regulating these systems.

Securities and Exchange Commission
www.sec.gov

The SEC's mission is to maintain the integrity of the securities markets. The SEC requires publicly held companies to report financial information as a protection for investors, to ensure that they have the information they need to make investment decisions.

Social Security Administration
www.ssa.gov

SSA operates the nation's largest anti-poverty program – sending Social Security checks to the nation's retired and disabled and their families. SSA collects funds for these programs and others from earnings identified by individuals' Social Security numbers.

Smithsonian Institution
www.si.edu

The Smithsonian Institution provides the public with educational programs and research as well as access to dozens of museums and the National Zoo.

United States Agency for International Development
www.usaid.gov

USAID promotes economic growth and development abroad in support of U.S. foreign policy. Working with other governments, as well as business and non-profit organizations, USAID operates programs in areas including health, democracy, agriculture, and conflict prevention.

APPENDIX

Ten Tips for Landing a Government Job

1. Think creatively: One of the advantages of considering the federal government as a place to work is that there are many opportunities in many places. So you want to be an accountant? There are accounting jobs in virtually every government agency, so take the time to look around and think creatively. Maybe you can combine your career aspirations with your life-long interest in space exploration by taking an accounting job with NASA. Don't let geography stop you: contrary to popular belief, the vast majority of federal jobs—about 84 percent—are located outside the Washington, DC area. The federal government has job opportunities literally worldwide.

2. Know who does the hiring: Many people think of the federal government as a single employer, but this is not the case. The hiring process in the government is decentralized: each agency does its own. This makes sense for a workforce of over 1.8 million civilian employees. But it also means there is no single location to which one submits an application. The best source of information for federal job opportunities is USAJOBS, a website run by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management: www.usajobs.opm.gov.

3. Target your search: In addition to career opportunities in the legislative and judicial branches of the federal government, there are over 70 individual departments and agencies in the executive branch—by far the largest employer among the three branches. Executive branch agencies range in size from less than 100 employees to over 300,000. The United States Government Manual can help you narrow down your search to agencies that interest you most. The manual provides a brief description of every agency, its organization, mission, and locations. To download a free copy, go to www.access.gpo.gov/nara/browse-gm-01.html.

4. Log onto the Web: The federal government has made a concerted effort to become accessible to the public via the web. Every government job that is open to candidates from outside the government is posted on www.usajobs.opm.gov. Jobs specifically for students are at www.studentjobs.gov. The Partnership for Public Service's websites, www.ourpublicservice.org, and www.calltoserve.org, also offer useful information about the availability of jobs and how to apply. When you decide on the specific federal agencies in which you have an interest, don't forget to check out those agencies' individual websites.

5. Weigh the full benefits of a federal job: Working in the government offers unprecedented opportunities to make a difference in your community and your world - and a pretty good benefits package to boot. The government's benefit packages—the federal health benefits program, Thrift Savings Plan, and federal retirement system—are among the best in the world. Most agencies also grant flexible work schedules and other benefits that promote a work-life balance. Government service can offer on-the-job experience that most private companies can't match.

6. Remember that government can be a career-builder, not just a career: The federal government provides a number of creative ways for you to both serve your country and build your resume without having to commit your entire life to one job. Some federal positions start on a time-limited basis (typically one or two years) but offer the possibility of converting to a career position at the end of that time. Check out the federal career intern program (www.opm.gov/careerintern), which is used by a variety of different federal agencies. The government's retirement system is portable too, so you can take your money with you when you leave government service.

7. Be prepared: When it comes to applying for a federal job, the more prepared you are ahead of time, the better off you'll be. Read the posting carefully and follow the directions. Speaking of applications . . .

8. Be patient – the wait can be a good thing: Applying for and getting a government job can be a lengthy process. Just because you haven't heard from anyone two weeks after you e-mailed your application doesn't mean you're out of the running. Remember, federal jobs must be filled based on merit. It also means that the hiring process is an open competition that may take a little longer than you might like. But the good news is, in the end your experience, education, and competency is what will matter most.

9. Don't panic: Frightening as they may look, those federal job applications aren't that difficult. Most of the information requested is to help find the best person for the job—even if it's hard to see the relevance of some of it. So go ahead and provide the information about yourself in whatever format the application process requires.

10. Make the most of an unprecedented opportunity: More than half of all federal employees may become eligible to retire in the next five years. That's a huge amount of experience and institutional memory walking out the door, and the government will need good, qualified candidates to replace these people. That said, you have a terrific opportunity to get some great work—and life—experience in a government job.

A Guide to Federal Lingo

Admittedly, the federal government uses a lot of terms in describing its jobs that are far from intuitive. Sometimes it can feel like you are swimming in alphabet soup, but understanding these terms will make you a more knowledgeable, and successful, job seeker.

Career-Conditional Employee:

A career-conditional employee has to complete three years of service before becoming a full career or “status” employee. After that three years, if you pass, you become an official “career” employee - which means you have a better shot of staying on board if there’s downsizing. It also gives you an edge when applying for other federal jobs down the road.

Competitive Service:

Most civil service jobs fall under this category. Competitive jobs must be filled through a fair, open and merit-based process.

Excepted Service:

Federal positions that are not covered by certain civil service personnel rules and regulations. Most excepted service positions are still filled through a competitive process.

Federal Resume:

There actually is no single, mandated form, though some vacancy postings will refer to it. When push comes to shove, the term just means a resume that contains all the information required to apply for a federal job.

Form C (OPM form 1203):

An optical scan form – a bubble sheet like the SAT - on which applicants mark the answers to employment-related questionnaires, if required for the application process. Some agencies have applicants answer these question online.

General Schedule (GS):

The general pay scale system for white collar jobs in the federal government. Positions are identified by GS level from GS 1 to GS 15.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs):

The necessary characteristics of an applicant qualified for a particular job. Most job postings ask applicants to write a supplemental statement about specific KSAs. These are like short essays that describe how your skills and experiences match those desired for the job.

Occupational Questionnaire:

Questionnaire included in some applications aimed at assessing candidate qualifications through detailed multiple choice or yes-and-no questions.

Optional Application For Federal Employment (OF 612):

The closest thing that actually exists to the federal resume form. This can be used as the resume part of your application for virtually all federal jobs.

OF510:

An OPM booklet, also known as “Applying for a Federal Job.” This document lists all of the information that has to be included on a federal resume.

Office of Personnel Management:

The federal government’s human resources agency.

Outstanding Scholar Designation:

The Outstanding Scholar Program enables agencies to hire entry or near-entry level candidates based on their undergraduate college grades. Candidates with an undergraduate grade point average of 3.5 or better may be hired directly without a competitive process.

Public Trust Designation:

Positions that require applicants to undergo a background check.

Qualifications Standards:

Basic qualification standards are developed for each occupation by the Office of Personnel Management and are available for review at www.opm.gov/qualifications/index.htm. These basic qualifications may be augmented by an individual federal agency by the addition of specialized qualifications needed in a specific job. Each federal vacancy announcement should list all basic and specialized qualification requirements.

Superior Academic Achievement:

While completion of 4 academic years above high school or a bachelor’s degree qualifies a student for a GS-5 level position in a professional or administrative occupation, superior academic achievement defined as graduation in the upper third of one’s class, a grade point average of B or better, or membership in a nationally recognized honors society such as Phi Beta Kappa qualifies a graduating student for a GS-7 level position.

Status Candidates:

Job applicants currently working for the federal government or certain former federal employees.

SF-86:

Security questionnaire required for certain positions. Asks questions regarding education, past and current employers, police records, financial situation, drug and alcohol usage, etc.

Term Position:

Under term employment, the employing agency hires someone to work for a limited period of time between one and four years.

Upward Mobility:

A program agencies can use to groom talent by creating or restructuring positions so they can be filled by promising entry-level applicants who will then be offered training and other career-development opportunities.

Veterans Preference:

In the competitive process, veterans receive preferential consideration, typically by having 5 or 10 points added to their scores, during the examination process.

More Federal Agency Links

United States Department of Agriculture **www.usda.gov**

Department of Agriculture employees work in:

- Rural Business-Cooperative Service - www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs
- Rural Housing Service - www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/index.html
- Rural Utilities Service - www.rurdev.usda.gov/rus/index.html
- Agricultural Marketing Service - www.ams.usda.gov
- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - www.aphis.usda.gov/vs
- Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration - www.usda.gov/gipsa
- Food Safety and Inspection Service - www.fsis.usda.gov/index.htm
- Food and Nutrition Service - www.fns.usda.gov/fns
- Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion - www.usda.gov/cnpp
- Farm Service Agency - www.fsa.usda.gov
- Commodity Credit Corporation - www.fsa.usda.gov/dam/fmd/ccc/CCCMisGoals.htm
- Risk Management Agency - www.rma.usda.gov
- Foreign Agricultural Service - www.fas.usda.gov
- Agricultural Research Service - www.ars.usda.gov
- Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service - www.reeusda.gov
- Economic Research Service - www.ers.usda.gov
- National Agricultural Statistics Service - www.usda.gov/nass
- Forest Service - www.fs.fed.us
- Natural Resources Conservation Service - www.nrcs.usda.gov
- National Sheep Industry Improvement Center - www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/cssheep.htm

United States Department of Commerce **www.doc.gov**

Department of Commerce employees work in:

- Bureau of Economic Analysis - www.bea.doc.gov
- Bureau of Export Administration - www.bxa.doc.gov
- Economic Development Administration - www.doc.gov/eda
- International Trade Administration - www.trade.gov
- U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service - www.usatrade.gov
- Minority Business Development Agency - www.mbda.gov
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - www.noaa.gov
- National Weather Service - www.nws.noaa.gov
- National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service - www.nesdis.noaa.gov
- National Marine Fisheries Service - www.nmfs.noaa.gov
- National Ocean Service - www.nos.noaa.gov
- National Telecommunications and Information Administration - www.ntia.doc.gov
- Patent and Trademark Office - www.uspto.gov
- National Institute of Standards and Technology - www.nist.gov
- National Technical Information Service - www.ntis.gov
- Technology Administration - www.ta.doc.gov
- Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research - www.oar.noaa.gov
- Economics and Statistics Administration - www.stat-usa.gov
- Bureau of the Census - www.census.gov

United States Department of Defense

www.defenselink.mil

Department of Defense civilian employees work in:

- United States Air Force - www.af.mil
- United States Army - www.army.mil
- United States Navy - www.navy.mil
- United States Marine Corps- www.usmc.mil
- Office of the Secretary - www.defenselink.mil/osd/topleaders.html
- Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff - www.dtic.mil/jcs
- American Forces Information Service - www.defenselink.mil/afis
- Defense Security Service - www.dss.mil
- Army and Air Force Exchange Service - www.aafes.com
- Department of Defense Education Activity - www.odeDODDea.edu
- The Department of Defense Human Resources Activity - www.dhra.osd.mil/dhra/owa/go
- Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences - www.usuhs.mil
- TRICARE - www.tricare.osd.mil
- The Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office - www.dtic.mil/dpmo
- Office of Economic Adjustment - emissary.acq.osd.mil/OEA/home.nsf
- Defense Intelligence Agency - www.dia.mil
- Defense Legal Services Agency - www.defenselink.mil/DODgc
- Defense Logistics Agency - www.dla.mil
- Defense Security Cooperation Agency - www.dsca.osd.mil
- Defense Threat Reduction Agency - www.dtra.mil
- National Imagery and Mapping Agency - www.nima.mil
- National Security Agency/Central Security Service - www.nsa.gov
- Missile Defense Agency - www.acq.osd.mil/bmdo
- Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency - www.darpa.mil
- Defense Commissary Agency - www.commissaries.com
- Defense Contract Audit Agency - www.dcaa.mil
- Defense Contract Management Agency - www.dcma.mil
- Defense Finance and Accounting Service - www.dfas.mil
- Defense Information Systems Agency - www.disa.mil

United States Department of Education

www.ed.gov

Department of Education employees work in:

- Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students - www.ed.gov/offices/OBEMLA
- Office of Student Financial Assistance Programs - www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP
- Office of Postsecondary Education - www.ed.gov/offices/OPE
- Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services - www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS
- Office of Elementary and Secondary Education - www.ed.gov/offices/OESE
- Office of Educational Research and Improvement - www.ed.gov/offices/OERI
- Office of Vocational and Adult Education - www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE
- National Center for Education Statistics - nces.ed.gov
- Office for Civil Rights - www.ed.gov/offices/OCR

United States Department of Energy

www.doe.gov

Department of Energy employees work in:

- Office of the Departmental Representative to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board - www.deprep.org
- Office of Counterintelligence - www.ch.doe.gov/insidech/org_offices/oci/Homepage/index.htm
- Office of Intelligence - Website is Classified
- Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy - www.eren.doe.gov
- Office of Fossil Energy- www.fe.doe.gov
- Office of Nuclear Energy, Science, and Technology - www.ne.doe.gov
- Energy Information Administration - www.eia.doe.gov
- National Petroleum Technology Office - www.npto.doe.gov
- National Nuclear Security Administration - www.nnsa.doe.gov
- Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management - www.rw.doe.gov/homejava/homejava.htm
- Environmental Management Office - www.em.doe.gov/index4.html
- Office of Science - www.er.doe.gov
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission - www.ferc.us
- Southeastern Power Administration - www.federalregister.com/hpage/spa.html Southwestern Power Administration - www.swpa.gov
- Western Area Power Administration - www.wapa.gov
- Bonneville Power Administration - www.bpa.gov/indexmain.shtml

United States Department of Health and Human Services

www.hhs.gov

Department of Health and Human Services employees work in:

- Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Services - www.hhs.gov/agencies/os.html
- Administration for Children and Families - www.acf.dhhs.gov
- Administration on Aging - www.aoa.gov
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality - www.ahrq.gov
- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry - www.atsdr.cdc.gov
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - www.cdc.gov
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services - www.cms.hhs.gov
- Food and Drug Administration - www.fda.gov
- Health Resources and Services Administration - www.hrsa.gov
- Indian Health Service - www.ihs.gov
- National Institutes of Health - www.nih.gov
- Program Support Center - www.psc.gov
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - www.samhsa.gov

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

www.hud.gov

Department of Housing and Urban Development employees work in:

- Community Planning and Development - www.hud.gov/offices/cpd
- Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control - www.hud.gov/offices/lead
- Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity - www.hud.gov/offices/fheo
- Office of Public and Indian Housing - www.hud.gov/offices/pih
- Government National Mortgage Association (Ginnie Mae) - www.ginniemae.gov
- Office of Housing - www.hud.gov/offices/hsg

- Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight - www.ofheo.gov
- Office of Multi-Family Housing Assistance Restructuring - www.hud.gov/offices/omhar

United States Department of the Interior **www.doi.gov**

Department of the Interior employees work in:

- United States Fish and Wildlife Service www.fws.gov
- National Park Service www.nps.gov
- United States Geological Survey www.usgs.gov
- Bureau of Indian Affairs www.bia.gov , www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html
- Minerals Management Service www.mms.gov
- Bureau of Land Management www.blm.gov
- Bureau of Reclamation www.usbr.gov
- Office of Surface Mining - www.osmre.gov

United States Department of Justice **www.usdoj.gov**

Department of Justice employees work in:

- Antitrust Division - www.usdoj.gov/atr
- Civil Division - www.usdoj.gov/civil/home.html
- Civil Rights Division www.usdoj.gov/crt
- Criminal Division - www.usdoj.gov/criminal
- Environment and Natural Resources Division - www.usdoj.gov/enrd
- Tax Division - www.usdoj.gov/tax
- Federal Bureau of Investigations - www.fbi.gov
- Bureau of Prisons - www.bop.gov
- United States Marshals Service - www.usdoj.gov/marshals
- U.S. National Central Bureau - www.usdoj.gov/usncb
- Immigration and Naturalization Service - www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/index.htm
- Drug Enforcement Administration - www.usdoj.gov/dea
- Office of Justice Programs - www.ojp.usdoj.gov
- Executive Office for Immigration Review - www.usdoj.gov/eoir
- The Board of Immigration Appeals - No Website Available
- United States Parole Commission - www.usdoj.gov/uspc
- Office of Community Oriented Policing Services - www.usdoj.gov/cops
- Foreign Claims Settlement Commission - www.usdoj.gov/fcsc

United States Department of Labor **www.dol.gov**

Labor Department employees work in:

- Bureau of International Labor Affairs - www.dol.gov/ilab
- Women's Bureau - www.dol.gov/wb
- Office of Workforce Security - workforcesecurity.doleta.gov
- Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration - www.dol.gov/pwba
- Employment Standards Administration - www.dol.gov/esa
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration - www.osha.gov

- Mine Safety and Health Administration - www.msha.gov
- Bureau of Labor Statistics - www.bls.gov
- Employment and Training Administration - www.doleta.gov
- Veterans Employment and Training Service - www.dol.gov/vets
- Office of Disability Employment Policy - www.dol.gov/odep

United States Department of State **www.state.gov**

Department of State employees work in:

- The Bureau of Arms Control - www.state.gov/t/ac
- The Bureau of Consular Affairs - travel.state.gov
- Office of Counterterrorism - www.state.gov/s/ct
- The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor - www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights
- The Bureau of Diplomatic Security - ds.state.gov/index.html
- The Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs - www.state.gov/www/issues/economic
- The Office of Foreign Missions - www.usembassy.state.gov
- The Bureau of Intelligence and Research - www.state.gov/s/int
- The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs - www.state.gov/g/inl
- The Bureau of International Organization Affairs - www.state.gov/p/io
- The Office of Medical Services - No Website Available
- Bureau of Nonproliferation - www.state.gov/t/np
- The Bureau of Oceans, and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs - www.state.gov/g/oes
- The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs - www.state.gov/t/pm
- The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration - www.state.gov/g/prm
- The Chief of Protocol - www.state.gov/s/cpr
- The Bureau of Verification and Compliance - www.state.gov/t/vc
- Office of War Crimes Issues - www.state.gov/s/wci
- International Women's Issues - www.state.gov/g/wi

United States Department of Transportation **www.dot.gov**

Department of Transportation employees work in:

- Transportation Security Administration - www.tsa.gov
- Federal Aviation Administration - www.faa.gov
- Federal Highway Administration - www.fhwa.dot.gov
- Federal Railroad Administration - www.fra.dot.gov
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration - www.nhtsa.dot.gov
- Federal Transit Administration - www.fta.dot.gov
- Coast Guard - www.uscg.mil/uscg.shtm
- Maritime Administration - www.marad.dot.gov
- St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation - www.seaway.dot.gov
- Research and Special Programs Administration - www.rspa.dot.gov
- Bureau of Transportation Statistics - www.bts.gov
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration - www.fmcsa.dot.gov
- Surface Transportation Board - www.stb.dot.gov
- Intelligent Transportation Systems - www.its.dot.gov

United States Department of the Treasury

www.treas.gov

Treasury Department employees work in:

- United States Mint - www.usmint.gov
- Bureau of the Public Debt - www.publicdebt.treas.gov
- Internal Revenue Service - www.irs.gov
- Financial Management Service - www.fms.treas.gov
- Office of Thrift Supervision - www.ots.treas.gov
- Federal Law Enforcement Training Center - www.ustreas.gov/fletc
- Bureau of Engraving and Printing - www.bep.treas.gov
- United States Customs Service - www.customs.gov
- Office of the Comptroller of the Currency - [www.occ.treas.gov](http://www OCC.treas.gov)
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms - www.atf.treas.gov
- U.S. Secret Service - www.ustreas.gov/uss
- Office of Foreign Assets Control - www.ustreas.gov/ofac

United States Department of Veterans Affairs

www.va.gov

Department of Veterans Affairs employees work in:

- National Cemetery Administration - www.cem.va.gov/index.htm
- Center for Minority Veterans - www.va.gov/minority_new/main/index.asp
- Center for Women Veterans - www.va.gov/womenvet
- Veterans Health Administration - www.va.gov/health_benefits
- Veterans Benefits Administration - www.vba.va.gov
- Compensation and Pension Service - www.vba.va.gov/bln/21
- Education Service - www.gibill.va.gov
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service - www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre
- Board of Veterans' Appeals - www.va.gov/vbs/bva

Independent Federal Agency Links

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
www.achp.gov

AMTRAK (National Railroad Passenger Corporation)
www.amtrak.com

Broadcasting Board of Governors
www.bbg.gov

Central Intelligence Agency
www.cia.gov

Commission on Civil Rights
www.usccr.gov

Commodity Futures Trading Commission
www.cftc.gov

Consumer Product Safety Commission
www.cpsc.gov

Corporation for National and Community Service
www.cns.gov

Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
www.dnfsb.gov

Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
www.eeoc.gov

Export-Import Bank of the United States
www.exim.gov

Farm Credit Administration
www.fca.gov

Federal Communications Commission
www.fcc.gov

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
www.fdic.gov

Federal Election Commission
www.fec.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency
www.fema.gov

Federal Housing Finance Board
www.fhfb.gov

Federal Labor Relations Authority
www.flra.gov

Federal Maritime Commission
www.fmc.gov

Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
www.fmcs.gov

Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission
www.fmshrc.gov

Federal Reserve System
www.federalreserve.gov

Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board
www.frtib.gov

Federal Trade Commission
www.ftc.gov

General Accounting Office
www.gao.gov

General Services Administration
www.gsa.gov

Institute of Museum and Library Services
www.imls.gov

Inter-American Foundation
www.iaf.gov

International Broadcasting Bureau
www.ibb.gov

Merit Systems Protection Board
www.mspb.gov

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
www.nasa.gov

National Archives and Records Administration
www.nara.gov

National Capital Planning Commission
www.ncpc.gov

National Credit Union Administration
www.ncua.gov

National Endowment for the Arts
www.nea.gov

National Endowment for the Humanities
www.neh.gov

National Labor Relations Board
www.nlrb.gov

National Mediation Board
www.nmb.gov

National Science Foundation
www.nsf.gov

National Transportation Safety Board
www.nts.gov

Nuclear Regulatory Commission
www.nrc.gov

Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission
www.oshrc.gov

Office of Compliance
www.compliance.gov

Office of Government Ethics
www.usoge.gov

Office of Management and Budget
www.whitehouse.gov/omb

Office of Personnel Management
www.opm.gov

Office of Special Counsel
www.osc.gov

Overseas Private Investment Corporation
www.opic.gov

Panama Canal Commission
www.pancanal.com

Peace Corps
www.peacecorps.gov

Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation
www.pbgc.gov

Postal Rate Commission
www.prc.gov

Railroad Retirement Board
www.rrb.gov

Securities and Exchange Commission
www.sec.gov

Selective Service System
www.sss.gov

Small Business Administration
www.sba.gov

Smithsonian Institution
www.si.edu

Social Security Administration
www.ssa.gov

Tennessee Valley Authority
www.tva.gov

Trade and Development Agency
www.tda.gov

United States Agency for International Development
www.usaid.gov

United States International Trade Commission
www.usitc.gov

United States Postal Service
www.usps.gov

“Let public service be a proud and lively career. And let every man and woman who works in any area of our national government, in any branch, at any level, be able to say with pride and with honor in future years: ‘I served the United States government in that hour of our nation’s need.’”

**— John F. Kennedy
35th President of the United States**

“How well the tasks of government are done affects the quality of lives of all people. Moreover, the success of any political leadership in implementing its policies and objectives depends heavily upon the expertise, quality and commitment of the professional career employees of government.”

**— George H.W. Bush
41st President of the United States**

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